



HEALTH AWARENESS

New FDA Warning Sheds Light On Magnetic Resonance Exam Safety

(NAPSA)—Thousands of MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) and MRA (magnetic resonance angiography) tests are performed each year in the U.S. to scan tissue in the body for signs of disease or injury.

In many MR exams, a gadolinium-based contrast agent is injected into patients to help highlight specific areas of a patient's organs, tissue or blood vessels. However, several medical studies have recently discovered that gadolinium-based contrast agents can have dangerous and even deadly side effects on patients.

Contrast Agent Dangers

The FDA has issued a warning for gadolinium-based contrast agents, commonly used in MR exams, about the link between these contrast agents and a sometimes fatal disease that occurs in patients with renal insufficiency called nephrogenic systemic fibrosis or nephrogenic fibrosing dermopathy (NSF/NFD).

NSF/NFD is a sometimes fatal skin disease characterized by swelling and tightness of the skin, muscle weakness and thickened patches of skin. The FDA has asked manufacturers of gadolinium-based MR contrast agents to place a "black-box" warning on the packaging, warning patients about the dangers of using gadolinium-based contrast agents during MR exams.

Contrast-Free MR— A Safe Solution

Prior to receiving an MRI or MRA, patients should ask their



There are ways to make MRI and MRA exams even safer.

physician about the risks of gadolinium-based contrast exams and options for safer MR tests. For example, Toshiba America Medical Systems, Inc. has developed several unique contrast-free MR imaging techniques to perform MR exams without the use of any contrast agents. The company is the only in the medical industry that offers these types of contrast-free MR techniques at this time.

Its contrast-free MR exams achieve the same high-quality image results without the risks of using gadolinium-based contrast agents. Since 1998, the company has been at the forefront of contrast-free MR imaging. The techniques developed by Toshiba and used on its Vantage MR system enable physicians to bypass the use of all contrast agents during MRA exams.

If you're scheduled to have an MR exam, speak with your physician about the risks of gadolinium-based contrast agents and options for having a contrast-free MR exam instead.